



ŒDICNEMUS GRALLARIUS.

Southern Stone Plover.

Charadrius grallarius, Lath. Ind. Orn. Supp., p. lxvi.

———— *frenatus*, Lath. Ind. Orn. Supp., p. lxvii.—Less. Man. d'Orn., tom. ii. p. 321.

High-legged Plover, Lath. Gen. Syn. Supp., vol. ii. p. 319.—Ib. Gen. Hist., vol. ix. p. 320.

Œdicnemus longipes, Geoff. in Mus. Paris.—Vieill. Gal. des Ois., tom. ii. pl. 228.—Temm. Pl. Col., 386.—Less. Traité d'Orn., p. 546.—Vieill. Nouv. Dict. d'Hist. Nat., tom. xxiii p. 232.—Ib. Ency. Méth. Orn., part i. p. 339. pl. 234. fig. 2.

Bridled Plover, Lath. Gen. Syn. Supp., tom. ii. p. 320.—Ib. Gen. Hist., vol. ix. p. 342.

Œdicnemus grallarius, List of Birds in Brit. Mus. Coll., part iii. p. 59.

Charadrius longipes, Wagl. Syst. Avium, Charadrius, sp. 4.

———— *fuscus*, Lath. Ind. Orn. Supp., p. lxvi.?

Brown Plover, Lath. Gen. Syn. Supp., vol. ii. p. 320. ?—Ib. Gen. Hist., vol. ix. p. 342.?

Charadrius griseus, Lath. Ind. Orn. Supp., p. lxvii.?

Grisled Plover, Lath. Gen. Syn. Supp., vol. ii. p. 320. ?—Ib. Gen. Hist., vol. ix. p. 342.?

Weë-lo, Aborigines of Western Australia.

THERE are evidently two species of Stone Plover inhabiting Australia, one ranging all along the southern coast from east to west, and the other along the northern. At a hasty glance they appear very similar, but on comparison the northern bird is found to possess a much shorter wing and considerably longer tarsi than the bird here represented, which has been long known to us, having been described by Latham in his "Index Ornithologicus" under the name of *Charadrius grallarius*, and which inhabits all the open country to the southward of the 25th degree of south latitude. I have specimens now before me from Swan River, South Australia and New South Wales, in all of which countries it is equally common, wherever districts occur suitable to its habits and mode of life. Sandy plains, the crowns and sides of grassy hills and flats between the mountain ridges, particularly those that are of a rough and stony character, are the situations it usually frequents, and where it is mostly met with in pairs, but is occasionally seen in small companies of from eight to ten or more in number; it is at all times a shy bird, and it requires some degree of stratagem to approach it within gun-shot. It runs with great facility, and when not disposed to take wing squats on the ground by the side of a stone or a prostrate log of wood, and there remains so close as almost to admit of being trodden upon before it will rise. Upon an intruder approaching the vicinity of its young, it employs many enticing actions to attract his notice to itself, and if possible lead him away from the spot; at one moment assuming lameness to such an extent as to appear incapable of walking, at other times hanging down its wings as if escape by flight was impossible, yet withal is so wary that I never knew one captured by the hand, or obtained by any other means than by shooting it. While in a state of quiescence or walking about the plains, it is a stately and imposing bird; when driven to take wing it mounts in the air with a quick, rather laboured motion of the wings, does not fly to any great distance, but usually pitches again in some clear place among the trees, and seeks safety by running off and secreting itself among the bushes or squatting on the ground. On the approach of evening and during the early part of the night, its loud, harsh and peculiar cry, resembling the word *weë-lo* two or three times repeated, is often heard. It chiefly feeds at night upon insects of various kinds and berries.

The eggs are invariably two in number, and are deposited on the bare ground during September and the four following months. They vary considerably in colour, as well as in the form of their markings; their usual ground-colour is pale buff, thickly blotched all over with umber-brown; they are about two inches and a quarter long by one inch and five-eighths broad.

The markings and general appearance of the two sexes are so similar, that it is scarcely possible to distinguish the male from the female without the aid of dissection.

Crown of the head, back of the neck and back grey, each feather with a line of brownish black down the centre; space surrounding the eye white, bounded in front and below with a narrow streak, which, as well as the ear-coverts and a broad stripe down each side of the neck, is dark brown; lores and chin white; scapularies blackish brown, margined at the base with grey; the upper rows of wing-coverts brown, the lower ones white tipped with brown, all with a broad stripe of black down the centre; primaries brownish black, crossed towards the extremities by a broad irregular band of white; tertiaries light brown, with a dark stripe down the centre, and margined with white; tail brown, crossed by several bands of white and dark brown, and largely tipped with black; breast and abdomen buffy white, with a broad stripe of brownish black down the centre of each feather; lower part of the abdomen white; bill black; irides yellow; eye-lash black; legs sickly yellowish olive, gradually passing into the brown of the feet.

The Plate represents a male somewhat less than the natural size.